

Where'd You Go, Bernadette

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TED talks, "pay yourself in chard", shoeless Microsoft techies, Molly Moon ice cream--you don't have to be a current or ex-Seattleite to enjoy this funny book by Hollywood scriptwriter (*Arrested Development*) Maria Semple. If you've ever lived in a politically correct zone (Bloomington anyone?), you'll recognize many of the interpersonal dynamics pictured here.

Where'd You Go, Bernadette tells the story of a family - Bernadette, Bee, and Elgin Branch-- and their relationship to their child's school community.

Bernadette, a former architect and MacArthur genius award winner, has given up working on any creative projects to devote herself to her family. Her daughter Bee was born with a serious heart condition and for years Bernadette felt that she could not commit herself to any new designs due to her daughter's condition. But Bernadette, a woman full of prodigious talent and energy, has been driving herself and everyone around her nuts while her husband worked his way up the Microsoft hierarchy.

Minor Seattle annoyances set her off, say five-way traffic interchanges where one waits an eon for a turn at the green light. Too friendly Canadians provoke Bernadette's ire also. And turning her almost ballistic are messages from her daughter's private school that ask for volunteers. She ignores these but the fellow parents, whom she calls "gnats", mock her for her lack of community involvement--a major Seattle lapse. And then there are all those obnoxious Microsoft slogans that she must turn away from whenever she and Bee visit her husband's office. **Read more »**

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